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ABSTRACT

This paper presents highlights from the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment, which was given to a national sample representative of all students at grades 4, 8, and 12 and to state samples representative of all students at grade 8 in the 40 participating states and jurisdictions. It begins with questions and answers about NAEP and then briefly describes 6 objectives and the purposes for the 3 types of writing assessed. It then presents 9 sample writing tasks and responses (3 at each grade level and at each achievement level--basic, proficient, and advanced). The paper then presents national results (including that 23% of fourth graders, 27% of eighth graders, and 22% of twelfth graders were at or above the proficient level) and data on writing performance by gender, race/ethnicity, and type of school. It next presents data on school and home factors related to writing achievement, and data regarding writing performance within states. It concludes with a six-item list of other publications and related materials. (RS)

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NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card Highlights.

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NAEP 1998 WRITTING

Report Card Highlights

merican students' achievement in writing at the end of the twentieth century is an important indicator of whether young adults in the twenty-first century will have the writing skills necessary to express themselves clearly. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), America's only

ongoing survey of what students know and can do in various academic subjects, is one resource that can help inform the public about students' academic preparedness in writing.

The NAEP is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with oversight by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). In 1998, NAEP administered a writing assessment to a national sample representative of all students at grades 4, 8, and 12 and to state samples representative of all students at grade 8 in the states and other jurisdictions participating in the state-by-state assessment. The results of the assessment provide a snapshot of American students' achievement in writing.

This publication presents highlights from the 1998 NAEP writing assessment, describing its content, major findings at the national and state levels, and students' experiences at home and in school that appear to be associated with achievement in writing.



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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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NAEP IN A NUTSHELL

Q: What is NAEP?

A: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the nation's only ongoing assessment of what students know and can do in various subject areas. A project of the National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education, NAEP has assessed many academic subjects since its inception in 1969, including mathematics, science, reading, writing, wond geography, U.S. history, civics, social studies, and the arts.

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), an independent agency that oversees NAEP, determines which subjects will be assessed and how they will be assessed. With the assistance of educators, parents, public leaders, and concerned citizens, NAGB develops the "framework," or guidelines, that determine how a subject area will be assessed. In addition, NAGB sets achievement levels, or student performance standards, for the three grades assessed—4, 8, and 12.

Q: How is student performance reported?

A: The results of student performance on the NAEP assessments are reported for various groups of students (for example, fourth-grade female students, twelfth-grade students attending private schools). The differences in performance between groups of students in 1998 that are discussed in this report are statistically significant.

Student performance is described in two weys:

1) scale scores; and 2) achievement levels.

Scale Scores

Student performance is reported as an average score based on the NAEP writing scale that ranges from 0 to 300. The average scale score reflects the overall writing performance of a particular group of students.

Achievement Levels

Student writing performance is also reported in terms of three achievement levels: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Results based on achievement levels are expressed in terms of the percentage of students who attained each level. The three achievement levels are defined as follows:

Basic: This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient: This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analyticat skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

Q: How should NAEP achievement levels be interpreted?

A: The achievement levels are performence standards adopted by NAGB as part of its statutory responsibilities. The levels are collective judgments of what students should know and be able to do for each grade tested. They are based on recommendations by broadly representative panels of classroom teachers, education specialists, and members of the general public.

As provided by law, the Commissioner of Education Statistics, upon review of a congressionally mandated evaluation of NAEP, has determined that the achievement levels are to be considered developmental and should be interpreted and used with caution. However, both the Commissioner and NAGB believe these performance standards are useful for understanding student achievement. They have been widely used by national and state officials, including the National Education Goals Panel, as a common yardstick of academic performance.

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality, the students shown in the photographs for this record are not NAEP writing assessment participants.

The NAEP 1998 Writing Assessment

n 1998, NAEP assessed the writing achievement of students at grades 4, 8, and 12. A variety of tasks were used to engage students' interest and facilitate their best "first-draft" writing. The Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress provided the guidelines for developing the writing assessment. This framework, developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, represents the expertise and experience of a wide array of specialists and concerned citizens, such as writing teachers, researchers, business leaders, scholars, and policymakers. The framework is based on six objectives that should guide students' development as writers.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Students should write for a variety of purposes: narrative, informative, and persuasive.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Students should write on a variety of tasks and for many different audiences.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Students should write from a variety of stimulus materials, and within various time constraints.

OBJECTIVE 4:

Students should generate, draft, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expression in their writing.

OBJECTIVE 5:

Students should display effective choices in the organization of their writing. They should include detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas, and use appropriate conventions of written English.

OBJECTIVE 6:

Students should value writing as a communicative activity.



Purposes for Writing

The NAEP 1998 writing assessment measured students' performance on three types of writing: narrative, informative, and persuasive. These three broad types, or "purposes for writing," are commonly used in writing instruction, and thus were deemed most appropriate for NAEP's assessment of student achievement.

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing involves the production of stories or personal essays. It encourages writers to use their creativity and powers of observation to develop stories that can capture a reader's imagination.

The narrative tasks in the NAEP 1998 writing assessment asked students to write many kinds of stories (most fiction, some nonfiction). Some of the tasks asked students to write in response to photographs, cartoons, poems, or stories, which were provided with the assessment.

Scoring the 1998 Writing Assessment

Students' responses were evaluated using scoring guides containing descriptions for six levels of writing performance, ranging from "Unsatisfactory" to "Excellent." Responses were evaluated according to three key elements of writing: development, organization, and grammar. Scoring guides were developed for each grade level and purpose for writing (e.g., grade 4 narrative guide, grade 12 persuasive guide).

During scoring, raters were encouraged to accept the many unique ways in which students respond to a task — and to always reward good writing.

Informative Writing

Informative writing communicates information to the reader, whether it is to share knowledge or to convey messages, instructions, and ideas. It may involve reporting on events or experiences, or analyzing concepts and relationships.

The informative tasks in the 1998 writing assessment allowed students to write on specified subjects in a variety of formats, such as reports, reviews, and letters. Many of the tasks asked students to write in response to information provided with the assessment, such as newspaper articles, charts, photographs, and reported dialogues.

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing seeks to influence the reader to take some action or bring about change. It may contain factual information, such as reasons, examples, or comparisons; however, its main purpose is not to inform, but to persuade.

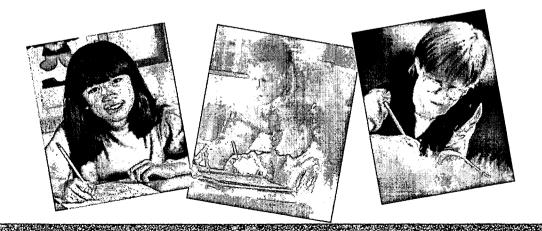
The persuasive tasks in the 1998 writing assessment asked students to write letters to friends, newspaper editors, or prospective employers, to refute arguments, or to take sides in a debate. Many of the tasks asked students to respond to letters, cartoons, or arguments, which were provided with the assessment.



Sample Writing Tasks and Responses

The following pages present sample 25-minute writing tasks and student responses from the NAEP 1998 writing assessment. The responses shown are examples of performance within each achievement level range: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

These nine responses (three each at grades 4, 8, and 12, respectively) were chosen by those who set achievement levels for the assessment. This group included teachers, other education specialists, and members of the general public.





Sample Tasks and Responses

Fourth-Grade Task: Favorite Object

We all have favorite objects that we care about and would not want to give up.

Think of one object that is important or valuable to you. For example, it could be a book, a piece of clothing, a game, or any object you care about.

Write about your favorite object. Be sure to describe the object and explain why it is valuable or important to you.

The student's response shown for Favorite Object; an informative task, is an example of the Basic achievement level for fourth grade. The response is somewhat organized and provides some details about the student's pet "Max" the "black rockwaller." The student describes, for example, the difference between Max's behavior with people he knows and those he doesn't, as well as Max's response when someone he knows comes home. Although meaning is generally clear in this response, it often lacks punctuation and has some grammatical lapses that force the reader to fill in gaps to fully understand it.

Proficient:

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Fourth-Grade Task: Castle

One morning a child looks out the window and discovers that a huge castle has appeared overnight. The child rushes outside to the castle and hears strange sounds coming from it. Someone is living in the castle!

The castle door creaks open. The child goes in.

Write a story about who the child meets and what happens inside the castle.



This student's response to Castle, a narrative task, is an example of the Proficient level of achievement in writing at grade 4. The response is clear and organized, with some illustrative details, such as the colors of the castle, that support the plot. The response also shows good plot development by building suspense as the boy enters the castle, goes upstairs, and finds the room with the "ugly monster" and "pretty princess." Most of the response is punctuated and capitalized correctly, with few grammatical errors. Because students had limited time to respond to tasks in the assessment, this story was not penalized for its abrupt ending.

Fourth-Grade Task: Invisible Friend

Open the envelope labeled K and take out the letter.

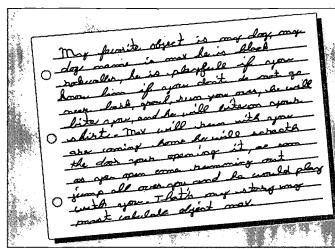
Pretend this letter is from an imaginary friend that you have had since kindergarten. Read the letter. Think about what you could say that would help your friend decide to become visible.

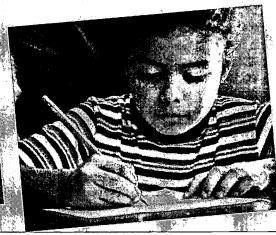
On the lined pages in your test booklet, write a letter to your imaginary friend. Convince your friend to become visible. In your letter, use details and examples.



This response to the persuasive task Invisible Friend is an example of the Advanced level of fourth-grade writing achievement. It contains numerous developed reasons why the imaginary friend should become visible. It also has strong audience awareness, conveying clearly persuasive suggestions to the invisible friend: "If you are nice enough, which I know you are, you could also make some nice, new, friends." The response is well structured with a strong ending, varied sentence structures, and effective vocabulary.

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 with a purple pink and the many and
 withour nambous He devided to get up a Ther
 he get dressed and want to see what
 he are and knowled mobile anoward so
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 Then are lay what in it
- outside of the color. He landed anound
 and saw that there must be someone
 living here of course clean he would not
 that it was clean in the doors

 The went up stains to a some
 the dayly monster, and there he days
 was a fretty princer. He was in large

Invisible Friend writing to me imagination. I wanted to and also to give some <u>visible</u> advice to turning advice OK, my mom and you and take care a real child We could Lots of fun together and maybe we could even share a room. We als friends and a could Still be one and my family low and to the same school and maybe the same class. If your nice I know you are You Could make some nice new, friends.

O We also have a lot of kids in the neighborhood, so you could also

of nice, new, friends hood. If you do come do come visible love my room flowers. I have and flowers boarden walls So pretty! One reason I want becouse visible is to become beatiful with probaly are so Another eyes and blond hair. to become visible because of the familys, espically - mine, they love great about being visible is know are so nice I want you to become visible. Sincerely, Your best friend



Sample Tasks and Responses

Eighth-Grade Task: Space Visitor

Imagine this situation!

A noise outside awakens you one night. You look out the window and see a spaceship. The door of the spaceship opens, and out walks a space creature. What does the creature look like? What does the creature do? What do you do?

Write a story about what happens next.

This student's response to the narrative task Space Visitor is an example of the Basic level of writing achievement at grade 8. It tells an organized story, with good plot development and some precise details, such as the writer's approach to and description of the alien. The piece does not present particularly varied sentence structures and lacks some sentence boundaries, but the writer's meaning is clear across the response.

Eighth-Grade Task: Designing a TV Show

A public television network is seeking ideas for a new series of shows that would be educational for teenagers. The series will include ten one-hour episodes and will be shown once a week. Some of the titles under consideration are:

"Great Cities of the World"

"Women in History"

"Nature Walks"

"American Legends"

Choose one of these titles. Write a letter to the network president describing your ideas for a new educational series. In your letter, describe what one episode might be like. Use specific examples of what information you would include in the episode so the network president will be able to imagine what the series would be like.

The Proficient level of eighth-grade writing achievement is represented by this response to Designing a TV Show, an informative task. Though not particularly long, the response is well organized and clear. It has a strong beginning and ending, and contains relevant details that convey information about the writer's idea for a television show. Sentence structure in the response is varied, with some good examples of complex sentences and few language errors.

Advanced: . . .

Eighth-Grade Task: Lengthening the School Year

Many people think that students are not learning enough in school. They want to shorten most school vacations and make students spend more of the year in school. Other people think that lengthening the school year and shortening vacations is a bad idea because students use their vacations to learn important things outside of school.

What is your opinion?

Write a letter to your school board either in favor of or against lengthening the school year. Give specific reasons to support your opinion that will convince the school board to agree with you.



The sample shown for Lengthening the School Year; a persuasive task, is an example of the Advanced achievement level for eighth grade. The writer presents a letter that consistently develops detailed reasons into a cohesive argument. The response is very well organized, with strong audience awareness that builds convincing persuasion for the student's position that the school year should not be lengthened. The sentence structure is varied and sophisticated, with effective word choice. The writer also uses strategies such as irony to refute the argument for lengthening the school year.

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One night last Friday there was Something Strange just thought well, there must 3 trange noises, noises new here before but I just went to sleep. but I also hera About about later the noise's were So loud I up it was the entranguest noise you ever hear I got up and ment down stairs outside 50 front door walks and Side I hard it then in the back on to my Suprize their was about 3 feet tall so I was a little

2 feet taller then it. R Coseemes and yelled Ituated durid me Hole! Helemen J. Screened my doc notices the Came down Stairs and Startted to See it He went up Stairs got his peper spay and sprayed the 3 food with it he the fat it back on Space ship and It flew I never sawit again but & Ciluay 5 woulded If I will ever See it again

Dear mr. President,

17798 I think you should have a show amus "women in history Blot of people want to know about women and what they've done to · help our country. There have been many women heroes, and they should be recognized the could d the show like wishbone except all the shows be about women in history costead of characters from a book, An idea for a Shaw is Anne

Fronk . You could go to the · where they hid for so long and do the man right there Everyone will get the chance to see has prine lived And or people howen't hard or seen herstory well, it's time their a do! So, please take into consideration my ideas and respond when your make your decision

To Whom it may Concern,

I've beard about the debate of whether or not to lengthen the school year. I decided to voice my opinion. I believe that the school year should not be lengthened. Kids are stressed and enough with homework and school without adding more. Some might say that Hids aren't learning enough, and since the future of the nation rests on their shoulders they need to go to school longer and learn more, I say Those who are adults now went to school the same amount, if not shorter, of time that we do and they haven't completely ruined the country. To more the country better you don't just need to know math, English and history; you need to Now social skills like getting along with others You learn social skills at school but you can learn them just as easily while on variation If you go to another country for vacation you learn to accept and respect other cultures. This can help extinguish predujures

If you add more schoolwork and homework stressed out you aren't as agreeable and sometimes just give up trying and don't care a difference in the world. I once heard someone say that you are only a kid for a short time. When you're an adult you have enough otress and in some hardly any time for fun so why put stress on hids and make them lose their time for fun. Why turn them into adults before their time.

I completely caree with the person who acid this. Let hids have flyn and not be stuck in a hot school listening to a lecture, or at home doing homework when they used to be swimming or hanging out with their friends.

Thank you for considering my letter

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252 Sample Tasks and Responses

Twelfth-Grade Task: Writing Mentar

Your school has a program in which a twelfth grader acts as a mentor for a tenth grader at the beginning of each school year. The mentor's job is to help the tenth grader have a successful experience at your school. The tenth grader you are working with is worried about being able to write well enough for high school classes.

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Write a letter to your tenth grader explaining what kind of writing is expected in high school classes and what the student can do to be a successful writer in high school.

As you plan your response, think about your own writing experiences. How would you describe "good" writing? What advice about writing has been helpful to you? What writing techniques do you use?

The response shown for Writing Mentor, an informative task, is an example of the Basic level of twelfth-grade writing achievement. Although the response is relatively brief, it is clear and focused, providing a well-organized sequence of information with some details. The student does not use sophisticated sentence structures in the response, but does offer some sentence variety. The response contains few language errors.

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Twelfth-Grade Task: Special Object

Read the following excerpt from a poem by Walt Whitman.

There was a child who went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon,
that object he became,
And that object became part of him for
the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

Whitman's poem suggests that certain objects become important to us and remain important to us even if we no longer have them.

Write a story in which you tell about an object that remains important to the main character over a period of years. The main character could be you or someone you know.

In your story, describe the main character's first encounter with the object, why the object is so important to the character, and how, over the years, it remains a part of the character's life.

This sample, an example of *Proficient* performance at grade 12, was written in response to *Special Object*, a narrative topic. It contains detailed characterizations that effectively recreate the time when the main character and her husband meet and fall in love, then moves somewhat abruptly to her fond memories many years later of her now-deceased husband. In spite of this gap, the response is well organized and shows good command of stylistic elements and control of language.

Advanced

Twelfth-Grade Task: One Vate

Your school is sponsoring a voter registration drive for 18-year-old high school students. You and three of your friends are talking about the project. Your friends say the following.

Friend 1: "I'm working on the young voters' registration drive.

Are you going to come to it and register? You're all 18, so you can do it. We're trying to help increase the number of young people who vote and it shouldn't be too hard — I read that the percentage of 18- to 20-year-olds who vote increased in recent years. We want that percentage to keep going up."

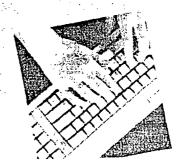
Friend 2: "I'll be there. People should vote as soon as they turn 18. It's one of the responsibilities of living in a democracy."

Friend 3: "I don't know if people should even bother to register.

One vote in an election isn't going to change anything."

Do you agree with friend 2 or 3? Write a response to your friends in which you explain whether you will or will not register to vote. Be sure to explain why and support your position with examples from your reading or experience. Try to convince the friend with whom you disagree that your position is the right one.

The sample response to the persuasive task One Vote is an example of the Advanced achievement level for twelfth-grade writing. It is a mature, well-reasoned argument for voting, which consistently supports points with well-developed details and persuasive examples. The writer's command of language is demonstrated by sophisticated, effective word choices throughout the response, as well as organization and sentence variety that consistently moves the argument forward.



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Day Sophmore; Through and your high school experience upu will be asked to write many reports and W. essays. Most of them will be about things you've never heard of that's when you head To the encurlopedia. I am going to give you M. a fund tips that so picked up from various teachers. First of all, make sure you plan your paper proposely If you just stant de fings writing you may run out of ideas really fast another thing you might want to remember · ·

is if you are writing a formal paper or report,

do not use compactions. It will be counted Off I learner the hardway Remember to indent when starting paragraphs and use proper purchiation. It you have any quartions feel from to ask me

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was a young immigrant in an unknown world; executioning I began exorcing in a marry factory for what I was young and fresh into my new employment legipped with a transformer and laid my eyo upon the most handsome young man I've over met. Sensing my attraction, he smiled and unued at me. I nearly but to the graind later that day we had which together. It toms aut us users both new Italian unmigrants - the only O difference - I was from Sicily and he was from Venice Needless to say is very off to a wonderful start. Time has possed now but I still recall Suprember

trudged into work going eight until I got in every. By the end of the day birthday and I was in was waring a delicate gold ring on my Gagere Michael is now deceased. Comembering his charming smile his with sense of humar, and his dark brown eyes being him back The many trials and tribulations throughout the good and had beyond death will we can not bring him back Even au fair worderful children con't bring him borr As I gaze at me mindow, I two to look at my hand still wearing that same gold ring from so many years age I I don't ned to bring him back ... I never really look him

whether a single person's vote hid bee a difference in an election is irrelement. @ a democratic nation is one that recognized an Individual right to think and formulate an opinion, and voting is a manifestation Marking the acknowledged ruler of the of that right. @ Faith, has little advantage over the other life forms he shares existence with pointed out in the play Inhant the Wind the horse is swifter the masquita more prelitic, even a ciruple sponge is more O durable What separates mauking from other species is his simple brain-pamer

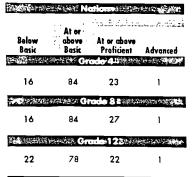
his ability to think

The founding fathers of america recognized the fatal flaw of other nations - Polish menerchs who eleved absolute authority over their subjects Dictatorial Societies have the same root cause of their demorall - the attempts of squelching out parsonal apinian

Voting celebrates the freedom the nation received on July 4, 1776 young is not a duty or a share. is a privatedge that we as humans have as our only advantage. We have the right and fortunantely because of democratic society, the frontous to think

NAEP Writing Assessment Results for the Nation

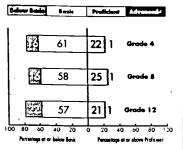
Percentage of Students at or Above the Writing Achievement Levels



As shown on the left, 23 percent of fourth graders, 27 percent of eighth graders, and 22 percent of twelfth graders were at or above *Proficient*—the level identified by the National Assessment Governing Board as the standard all students should reach.

While the table on the left shows the cumulative percentages of students "at or above" each achievement level, the figure on the right shows the percentage of students who fell below the Basic achievement level and those within the Basic, Proficient, and Advanced levels. The figure makes it clear that over half of the students at each grade were within the Basic level of writing performance.

Percentages of Students Within Each Achievement Level Range



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100, or to the exact percentages at or above achievement levels, due to rounding

Writing Performance by Gender

The NAEP writing scores at each grade (4, 8, and 12) range from 0-300, with a national average of 150. These scores can be used to compare various subgroups of students

At all three grades females had higher average scores than males.

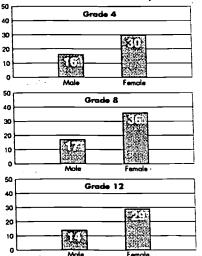
Average Writing Scores by Gender

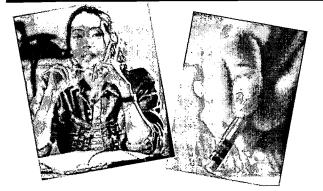
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Gender	•
8	Grade AE
Male	142
female	158
ą.	Grede 85
Male Female	140 160
Male Female	140 159

At each grade, a higher percentage of female students were at or above *Proficient* than male students. Across the three grades, between 29 and 36 percent of female students were at or above *Proficient*. In comparison, between 14 and 17 percent of male students were at or above this level.

Percentage of Students at or Above the Proficient Achievement Level by Gender





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Writing Performance by Race/Ethnicity

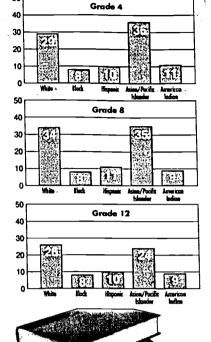
At grade 4, Asian/Pacific Islander students had higher scores than White students, who, in turn, had higher scores than Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students. American Indian students also scored higher than Black students at grade 4. At grades 8 and 12, Asian/Pacific Islander students and White students had higher scores than Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students.

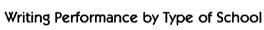
Average Writing Scores by Race/Ethnicity

Oy Race/Eurilally	Marie Control
White	157
Block	131
Hispanic	134
Asian/Pacific Islander	164
American Indian	138
-	Grade 850
White	158
Block	131
Hispanic	131
Asian/Pacific Islander	159
American Indian	132
	Grode: 122
White	156
Block	134
Hispanio	135
Asian/Pacific Islander	152
American Indian	129

Across the three grades, the percentages of students who reached or exceeded the. *Proficient* achievement level was 26 to 34 percent among White students, 8 percent among Black students, 10 to 11 percent among Hispanic students, 24 to 36 percent among Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 9 to 11 percent among American Indian students.

Percentage of Students at or Above the Proficient Achlevement Level by Race/Ethnicity





At all three grades, students attending nonpublic schools had higher scores than students attending public schools. Differences between the performance of students in public and nonpublic schools may be due to factors such as admission standards and the likelihood of greater parental involvement at nonpublic schools.

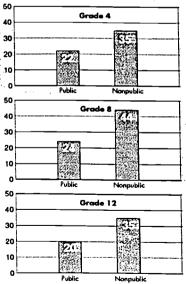
Average Writing Scores by Type of School



At each grade, a higher percentage of nonpublic school students reached or exceeded this level than did public school students.

Across the three grades, between 35 and 44 percent of nonpublic school students were at or above the *Proficient* level of performance. In comparison, between 20 and 24 percent of public school students reached or exceeded this level.

Percentage of Students at or Above the *Proficient* Achievement Level by Type of School

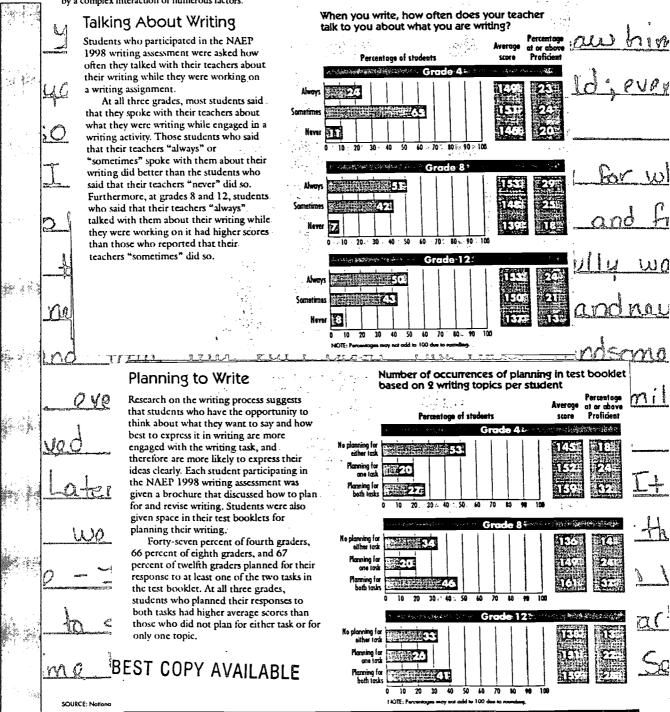




School and Home Factors Related to Writing Achievement

What classroom activities are related to students' writing performance? Are there aspects of students' home environments that seem to encourage and support writing achievement? NAEP collects information that may help researchers, educators, and parents answer these questions. For example, it may help educators discover that their activities to support writing are shared by their colleagues across the nation. It can suggest approaches to help students become better writers, and it can provide a resource for parents seeking to support their children's success in writing.

The data shown in the following figures are for students attending both public and nonpublic schools. While it is possible to study the relationship between students' writing performance and various home and school practices, it cannot be established that these practices cause a higher level of achievement in writing. The relationship that exists between writing achievement and another factor may, in fact, be caused by a complex interaction of numerous factors.



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.

ERIC

madin Ala Reading Materials Numbers of kinds of reading materials in the home (books, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia) in the Home Average at ar above score Proficient Young people who have a variety of Percentage of students reading materials in the home can learn to appreciate different kinds of reading experiences and writing styles. Furthermore, exposure to many different kinds of writing may support students' development as versatile writers. In the 1998 writing assessment, students were asked about the number and types of reading materials they had at home. Grade 8 At all three grades, between 38 and 53 percent of students said they had "four" different kinds of reading materials (books, magazine, newspaper, and an encyclopedia) at home. At all three 11. grades, the students who said they had "four" kinds of reading materials at home had higher scores than those who said they had "three" or "two or fewer." (D 70 80 How often do you discuss things you have **Discussing Studies** studied in school with someone at home? As at Home Percentage Average at er above Proficient Students need opportunities to discuss Percentage of students SCOre their schoolwork with caring family members at home. Research has documented the higher achievement of children whose families take an active role in their learning. Recognizing this, education reforms such as Goals 2000 have sought to strengthen the relationship between parents and schools. In the 1998 writing assessment, Grade 8 students were asked how often they discuss their studies with someone at home. At all three grades, most students said lever/hardh they discuss their studies with someone at home "at least once a week." These students had higher scores than those who said they discussed their studies at home. less frequently. Onca/twice 10 70 20 SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.

Writing Performance Within States

While the average scale scores of students across the nation provide parents and educators with a broad view of how well American students are performing in writing, it is also informative to examine the writing performance of students in individual states. In 1998, in addition to the national assessment, NAEP examined the writing performance of representative samples of eighth-grade students in states and other jurisdictions that volunteered to participate in a state-level assessment.



Eighth-grade public school students in 35 states and 4 other jurisdictions participated in the NAEP state-level assessment. The average scale score for the nation, shown in the first row of this table, represents the performance of public school students only.

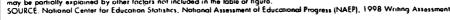
In 1998, the national average writing score was 148, and scores for students participating in the state-level assessment ranged from 124 to 165. Differences in writing performance among states and jurisdictions are most likely related to a combination of factors, including the effectiveness of an individual state's or jurisdiction's programs, economic constraints, and student demographic characteristics.



	omparisons With the ational Average		
	On the map, each part jurisdiction falls into or	e of three	
ab	oups: the average score ove the national average	e of 148, at or	
th	ound the national average national average.	ge, or below	
		O 000	
		the no	med above ahonal average med at or around
		Perfor	med below titonal average did not participate
.0 - 58	DDESS DoDDS	() [iu 10i	98 _ ' _ '
	Virgin Islands		

I	scale score
Nation	148
States	
Alabama	144
Arizona	143
Arkansas	137
California [†]	141
Colorado	151
Connecticut	165
Delaware	144
Florida	142
Georgia	146
Hawaii	135
Kentucky	146
Louisiana	136
Maine	155
Maryland	147
Massachusetts	155
Minnesotat	148
Mississippi	134
Missouri	142
Montanat	150
Nevada	140
New Mexico	141
New York [†]	146
North Carolina	150
Oklahoma	152
Oregon	149
Rhode Island	148
South Carolina	140
Tennessee	148
Texas	154
Utah	143
Virginia	153
Washington	148
West Virginia	144
Wisconsin [†]	153
Wyoming	, 146
Other Jurisdictions	
District of Columbia	126
DDESS	160
- DoDDS	156
Virgin Islands	124

DDESS. Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools; DoDDS: Department of Defense Depandents Schools (Overseas) NOTE National results are based on the national assessment sample, not an aggregated state assessment samples. Differences between states and jurisdingly explained by other factors not included in the table or figure. SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.





Achievement Level Results for the States

In 1998, across the participating states and other jurisdictions, between 47 and 66 percent of students were within the Basic level of performance, between 8 and 40 percent were within the Proficient level, and between 0 and 6 percent were within the Advanced level.

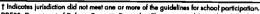
Furthermore, across the participating states and other jurisdictions, between 61 and 91 percent of students were at or above the Basic level of performance, and between 9 and 44 percent were at or above the Proficient level.



Percentage of Grade 8 Students Within Each Achievement Level Range for Public Schools Only: 1998

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL RESULTS Percentage of Students at Each Achievement Level

	Below Besle Basic	Proficient Advance	d c
NATION	59	T	
STATES	34	23 1	NATION
Alabama	₩ 7 <u>4</u> 2	1770	STATES
Arizana	202 59	<u> </u>	Alabama
Arkansas	63	20 1	Arizana
California	24 56	13 0	Arkansas
Calarada	142 59	19 1	California [†]
Connecticut	9 47	26 1	Calarada
Delaware	2021 58	40 5	Connecticut
· Flarida	59	21 1	Delaware
Georgia	37 60	19 1	Florido
Hawaii	28 21 58	14 11	Georgia
Kentucky	58 63 63		Hawaii
lauisiana	64	20 1	Kentucky
Maine	2181 54	1110	Lavisiana
Maryland†	M 60	30 2	Moine
Massachusetts	Ø1350 56	22 1	Maryland [†]
Minnesota	58	29 2	Massachusetts
Mississippi	63	24 1	Minnesata
Missouri	62	1770	Mississippi
Montana †	E)24 6)	24 1	Missouri
Nevada	61	16 0	Montana [†] Nevada
New Mexico	61	17 11	New Mexico
New Yark [†]	63	20 0	New Mexico
North Caralina	60 <u>57</u>	26 1	North Carolina
Oklahama	(a) 63	24 1	Oklahama
Oregan	57	25 1	Oregon
Rhade Island	58	24 1	Rhade Island
South Caralina	64	15 10	South Carolina
Tennessee	60	23 11	Tennessee
Texas	519 57	30 11	Texos
Utah	56	21 1	Utah
Virginia	MAS 61	27 11	Virginia
Washington	58	23 11	Washington
West Virginia	64	18 0	West Virginia
Wisconsint	60	27	Wiscansın
→ Wyoming	58	22 11	Wyaming
OTHER JURISDICTIONS			,g
District of Columbia	52	ו דידו	District of Columbia
DDESS	E 49	32 6	DDESS
20GeQ	353 58	30 1	D ₀ DDS
Virgin Islands	53	8 1	Virgin Islands
į			
10	0 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10	0 10 20 30 40	
	D		



Percentago et er ectoro Preficient



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I indicates jurisdiction did not meet one or more of the guidelines for school participation.

DDESS: Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools

DDDDS: Department of Defense Dependents Schools (Overseas).

NOTE: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. In addition, summing the percentages between two or more categories may no result in the accord cumulative percentage due to rounding. Notional results are based on the national sample, not on aggregated state assessment samples. Differences between states and jurisdictions may be partially explained by other factors not included in this table. SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.



Other Publications and Related Materials

For additional information and a full report on the NAEP 1998 writing assessment, read the NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card for the Nation and the States. Additional reports are available from the 1998 and past NAEP writing assessments. Please consult the information on the right for ordering these and other resources about the assessment.

Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Assessment Governing Board (http://www.nagb.org)

NAEP 1998 Writing State Report Card (request specific state)

NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress

NAEP 1996 Trends in Writing: Fluency and Writing
Conventions

Windows Into the Classroom: NAEP's 1992 Writing Portfolio Study For information on ordering these and other NAEP publications, write:

U.S. Department of Education ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398 Jessup, MD 20794-1398 or call toll-free 1-877-4 ED PUBS

VISIT NAEP ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB!

The Nation's Report Card Online offers a wealth of information including:

- Online Publications and Online Ordering
- Information for Teachers and School Administrators
- Information by Subject Area
- Sample Questions
- Information on NAEP Participation

http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard



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